Unearthing of Indo-Greek settlement

775. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

'(a) whether it is a fact that 2000 year old Indo-Greek settlement was unearthed while the laying of pipeline of Sardar Sarovar Project;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there existed a riverine port equivalent of a busy modern Indian port like Kandia which flourished nearly 2000 years ago; and

(c) if so, the details of the finding?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The extensive mounds at Nani Rayan, located on the estuary of River Rukmavati, near Mandvi, District Kuchchha, Gujarat, have yielded archaeological material ranging in time from c.3rd cent B.C. to c 7th century A.D. during laying pipeline of the Sardar Sarovar Project. Besides fragments of the Roman amphorae, the site has yielded coins of Mauryan, Kshatrapa, Gupta, Gujarat Sultanate periods in addition to a late Byzantine gold coin and a Ummaiyyad Dinara. The other antiquities include bronzes, terracotta figurines, plaques, beads, gamesmen, shell bangles, sealings and pottery of different cultural periods.

Circumstantial evidence indicates that Nani Rayan could be a riverine port having Indo-Roman trade as well.

General Assembly of World Tourism Organisation

776. PROF M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in October last, 15th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation was held at Beijing;

(b) if so, what are the details of address of our Tourism Minister;

(c) the steps so far taken by Government to improve the conditions of foreign tourists to India; and

(d) what has been the impact of such steps?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Minister in his address to the General Assembly, explained the new initiatives taken by Government of India to develop tourism. He suggested that World Tourism Organisation may change its name to International Organisation to Promote Tourism (IOPT), and suggested that World Tourism Organisation should fund projects in developing countries. He stressed on the importance of tourism to reduce disparities of income and reduction of poverty.

(c) Various steps have been taken by Government of India to popularize the tourist destinations of the country and to attract foreign tourists. These include:—

- A multi media publicity compaign 'Incredible India' encompassing print, TV and Internet, to position India as one of the best tourist destinations of the world.
- Promotional initiatives, including participation in major tourism marts, hospitality to journalists, familiarization tours, promotion of publicity material etc.

  Infrastructural development in tourism circuits and major destinations.

(d) As a result of these initiatives, there has been a growth of 14.6% in the foreign tourist arrivals to the country during the period January to October, 2003 as compared to corresponding period of 2002. The remaining two months, i.e. November and December, 2003, being good tourist season for the country, the trend of current high growth rate of 14.6% is expected to continue during this period also. As a result, the tourist arrival in the year 2003 is expected to reach at all time high of 2.73 million.

Technical know-how to carry river water to remote areas

†777. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN': Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a project for taking Yangtze river water upto 1300 kms. by China is being carried out which is scheduled to be completed by the year 2010;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.